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**Montgomery Councilmembers Marc Elrich and Valerie Ervin;  
Prince George's Chair Andrea Harrison and Councilmember Toles;  
and D.C. Council Chair Phil Mendelson Unite to Support  
\$11.50 'Regional' Minimum Wage**

*In Unique Collaboration, Similar Bills To Be Considered by Councils  
in Montgomery, Prince George's County and the District of Columbia*

October 9, 2013—Montgomery County Councilmembers Marc Elrich and Valerie Ervin, Prince George's County Council Chair Andrea Harrison and Councilmember Karen Toles and District of Columbia Council Chairman Phil Mendelson today united in a rare collaboration of their respective governments to support an effort to create a "regional minimum wage" that would gradually increase to \$11.50 per hour. The event was held at the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments in Northeast D.C.

The bills introduced in each jurisdiction differ slightly, but they share in the goal of establishing a minimum wage of \$11.50. The bills' sponsors today spoke of how a regional minimum wage gives each jurisdiction the best chance of having legislation that is fair to employers and the many employees that would be impacted.

Councilmember Elrich's Bill 27-13, which is co-sponsored by Councilmember Ervin and Council President Nancy Navarro, would increase the minimum wage in Montgomery County over a three-year period. A public hearing on Bill 27-13 is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 24.

"Maryland's minimum wage at \$7.25 per hour is the equivalent of \$15,000 a year for a full-time, year-round employee, and that leaves a wage earner and their family below the federal poverty line," said Councilmember Elrich. "We are not talking about people who are trying to take advantage of the system—we are talking about people who just want to take care of their families as a result of the hard work they do, and at the current minimum wage, that is not possible."

“If we have a minimum wage of \$11.50 per hour, it will at least be a step a right direction for workers, and in the end, everyone benefits. If people have a better chance of taking care of their own needs, they will be less dependent on the supplemental assistance that they now must have to survive.”

Bill 27-13 provides credit for an employer who provides health insurance to the employee. The County minimum wage would be phased in over several years. The rate would be \$8.25 per hour on July 1, 2014, \$9.75 per hour on July 1, 2015, and \$11.50 per hour on July 1, 2016. Beginning on July 1, 2017, the rate would be raised by any increase in the Consumer Price Index on an annual basis. The County minimum wage would not apply to a worker who is not covered by the State or federal minimum wage law, a tipped employee or a worker subject to an opportunity wage under the State or federal law.

“Raising the minimum wage is not just an economic demand; it is a civil right demand,” said Councilmember Ervin. “The 1963 March on Washington called for a \$2 per hour minimum wage. Fifty years later, we are still marching and fighting for jobs and freedom. In my opinion, we must combat poverty regionally by raising the minimum wage and creating jobs. These are two of the best ways to help our working families reach their goals and create better lives for themselves and their children. I am delighted to stand shoulder to shoulder with our regional partners to help make this happen.”

Prince George’s Council Chair Harrison’s Bill-94-2013, which has the unanimous support of her colleagues, would increase the minimum wage in Prince George’s to \$8.75 per hour beginning July 1, 2014; to \$10.25 per hour beginning July 1, 2015; and to \$11.50 per hour beginning July 1, 2016. Under the proposed measure, beginning July 1, 2017, the minimum wage would be adjusted for inflation in accordance with the Consumer Price Index, or the minimum wage pursuant to FLSA, whichever is greater.

“While the minimum wage has not increased in several years, the cost of nearly every essential resource for daily living—food, housing, utilities, transportation, and healthcare--continues to rise,” said Prince George’s Council Chair Harrison. “Increasing the minimum wage will help disadvantaged workers better provide for themselves and their families and improve their overall quality of life.”

The Prince George’s minimum wage legislative proposal will go before the Council’s Public Safety and Fiscal Management Committee on Thursday, Oct. 17, at 1:30 p.m. in Room 2027 of the County Administration Building in Upper Marlboro.

The D.C. Council has a series of wage bills that are scheduled to be the subject of public hearings before its Business, Consumer and Regulatory Affairs Committee at 10 a.m. Monday, Oct. 28, in the John A. Wilson Building. The Council’s objective is to approve a bill that will eventually establish the minimum wage at \$11.50 per hour.

“In two decades, the minimum wage has fallen far below the rate of inflation,” said D.C. Council Chair Mendelson. “Working together, we can restore some measure of equity for the lowest paid workers without fear of losing business across our borders.”

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